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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11
TRSE-00 BIB-01 /067 W
----------121754 071620Z /50
R 071432Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4704
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES
AMCONSUL PALERMO
AMEMBASSY PARIS

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, IT
SUBJ: BERLINGUER INTERVIEW WITH LA REPUBBLICA

BEGIN SUMMARY. IN A RARE PRESS INTERVIEW PUBLISHED IN THE ROME DAILY LA REPUBBLICA ON AUGUST 2, ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) SECRETARY GENERAL BERLINGUER EXPRESSED HIS VIEWS ON LENINISM, THE SOCIALIST PARTY (PSI), THE HISTORIC COMPROMISE, THE PRESENT GOVERNING FORMULA, AND EUROPEAN UNITY. THE CONTENTS OF BERLINGUER'S INTERVIEW FOLLOWED CLOSELY THE LINE TAKEN IN HIS INTORDUCTORY AND CONCLUDING SPEECHES BEFORE THE PCI'S RECENT CENTRAL COMMITTEE (CC) SESSION (ROME 13828). BERLINGUER DELIVERED A SHARP ATTACK AGAINST THE PSI AND A WARNING TO THE CRISTIAN DEMOCRATS (DC) THAT THE COMMUNIST PARTY INTENDS TO SUPPORT THE PRESENT GOVERNING ARRANGEMENT ONLY IF THE GOVERNMENT SERIOUSLY PROCEEDS TO DEAL WITH THE DIFFICULT PROBLEMS FACING THE
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COUNTRY. END SUMMARY.

1. PCI SECRETARY BERLINGUER GRANTED ONE OF HIS RARE PRESS INTERVIEWS TO LA REPUBBLICA WHICH PUBLISHED IT IN A FULL TWO-PAGE SPREAD ON AUGUST 2. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INTER-VIEW, IN PCI TERMS, IS ATTESTED TO BY THE FACT THAT THE PARY DAILY L'UNITA PUBLISHED IT IN ITS ENTIRETY ON THE

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SAME DAY IT APPEARED IN LA REPUBBLICA. A SUMMARY FOLLOWS
OF THE PRINCIPAL POINTS MADE BY THE PCI LEADER.

2. THE OCTOBER REVOLUTION AND LENINISM. ACCORDING TO
BERLINGUER, THE PCI WAS QUOTE BORN ON THE WAVE OF THE SOVIET
WORKERS' REVOLUTION END QUOTE. RESPONDING TO A QUESTION
ABOUT THE PCI'S TIES TO LENINISM, BERLINGUER SAID QUOTE
IF BY LENINISM YOU MEAN A DOCTRINAIRE CODE OF ACTION TO BE
IMPLEMENTED UNCRITICALLY IN ALL CIRCUMSTANCES, YOU WOULD
DO WRONG TO LENIN HIMSELF. WE ARE NOT LENINISTS OF THIS
SORT, EVEN IF, AS I AM AWARE, MANY TODAY WOULD LIKE US
TO BE OR CONSIDER US TO BE. END QUOTE. CONTINUING,
BERLINGUER NOTED THAT QUOTE THE PARTY MAINTAINS ITS OWN
IDENTITY BUT ALSO SEEKS UNITY WITH FORCES DIFFERENT FROM
ITSELF IN WORKING TOWARD TO THE OBJECTIVE OF SOCIAL TRANS-
FORMATION. LENIN ALSO BROADENED AND CHANGED MARX.
GRAMSCI AND TOGLIATTI DID THE SAME, AND THAT IS WHAT WE ARE
SEEKING TO DO. END QUOTE. HOWEVER, THE COMMUNIST LEADER
STRESSED THAT QUOTE THE TEACHINGS WHICH LENIN GAVE US
ARE STILL LIVING AND VALID. END QUOTE.

3. PARTY STATUTES AND DEMOCRATIC CENTRALISM.
BERLINGUER NOTED THE INADEQUACY WITHIN THE PRESENT ITALIAN
POLITICAL REALITY OF ARTICLE FIVE OF PCI STATUTES
INSOFAR AS IT REFERS TO MARXISM-LENINISM AS A RIGID AND
CLOSED DOCTRINE. HE STATED THAT THIS REFERENCE SHOULD BE
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CHANGED AT NEXT YEAR'S PARTY CONGRESS. CONCERNING DEOMO-
CRATIC CENTRALISM, BERLINGUER CONCEDED THAT TOWARD THE
END OF HIS LIFE LENIN LIMITED DISSENT. HE OBSERVED,
HOWEVER, THAT QUOTE WE DO NOT FORGET LENIN PUT IN A
POSITION OF POWER PEOPLE WHO DID NOT AGREE WITH HIS POLICY...
DEMOCARTIC CENTRALISM WAS NOT AND OUGHT NOT TO BE CONCEIVED
OF AS A NORM SUFFOCATING FREEDOM OF OPINION BUT AS A NORM
THAT GUARANTEES, FOLLOWING AN INTERNAL, DEMOCRATIC DEBATE,
THE BASIC CONDITION IN WHICH A PARTY IS CAPABLE OF
OPERATING IN AN EFFICIENT, UNITED AND DISCIPLINED
MANNER. END QUOTE.

4. THE SOCIALISTS. NOTING THAT FOR YEARS THE PCI HAS
BEEN PLACED UNDER CLOSE SCRUTINY BY QUOTE EXAMINERS
END QUOTE (AMONG WHOM SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ARE
INTERNATIONAL FORCES, I.E. THE U.S.), BERLINGUER LAMENTS
THAT RECENTLY CERTAIN PSI LEADERS JOINED THESE
RANKS JUST A MANY DC LEADERS HAVE REDUCED THEIR PRESSURE
ON THE PCI. IN BERLINGUER'S WORDS, THIS NEW PSI
BEHAVIOR IS QUOTE DISTURBING. END QUOTE. STRESSING THAT
THE PSI'S ACTIONS COULD HAVE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES FOR
LEFTIST FORCES IN ITALY, BERLINGUER OBSERVED THAT QUOTE

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FOR SOME MONTHS ONE COULD SAY THAT THE PSI IS TENDING TO
BECOME A POINT OF REFERENCE FOR AN AREA WHICH IS NEO-
LIBERAL, NEO-SOCIAL/DEMOCRATIC AND EVEN EXTREMIST. WE
ARE WATCHING TO SEE WHERE THIS GOES. BUT CERTAINLY WE
ARE NOT DIFFERENT. THE PSI IS STILL A GREAT PARTY OF
THE WORKING CLASS, AND IF IT STRENGTHENS ITSELF, IT IS
THE LEFT WHICH IS STRENGTHENED. IF, HOWEVER, IT BREAKS
THE UNITY OF THE LEFT, IT IS THE LEFT WHICH IS WEAKENED.
THIS HAS ALREADY HAPPENED BEFORE. WE DO NOT WANT IT TO
HAPPEN AGAIN. END QUOTE

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5. THIS HISTORIC COMPROMISE. RESPONDING TO A LA REPUBBLICA
QUESTION, BERLINGUER STRESSED THAT ITALY IS A COUNTRY
WHICH HAS NEED OF MAJOR SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL
CHANGES. IN HIS VIEW, THESE CANNOT BE CARRIED OUT
WITHOUT THE AGREEMENT OF THE CONTRY'S MAJOR POLITICAL
AND SOCIAL FORCES. THIS DOES NOT NECESSARILY MEAN, HE
ARGUED, THAT ALL THESE FORCES MUST NECESSARILY PARTICI-
PATE IN THE MAJORITY OR IN THE GOVERNMENT, BUT THEY
MUST BE PART OF THE UNITARY PROCESS THROUGH WHICH THE
CHANGES ARE EFFECTED. THIS PROCESS, HE SAID, IS
WHAT THE PCI MEANS WHEN IT SPEAKS OF THE HISTORIC
COMPROMISE.

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6. THE PRESENT GOVERNING FORMULA. AFTER NOTING
THE PCI'S DISAPPOINTMENT OVER THE RESULTS OF THE
RECENT ADMINISTARTIVE ELECTIONS, BERLINGUER OBSERVED
THAT THE QUESTION OF AN EVENTUAL PCI PARTICIPATION
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IN AN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT IS STILL OPEN. HE
DEFINED THE PERIOD QUOTE OF EXCEPTIONAL EMERGENCY
END QUOTE AS FINISHED, AND HE NOTED THE OPENING
OF A NEW PHASE WHICH SHOULD SEE THE ACTUALIZATION
OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAM. THE PCI LEADER
STRESSED QUOTE WE ARE IN THE MAJORITY AS A RESULT
OF OUR SENSE OF REPONSIBILITY TOWARDS THE COUNTRY
AND BECAUSE WE ARE AWARE THAT OUR CONTRIBUTION IS
IMPORTANT, BUT WE WILL NOT REMAIN THERE IF WE SEE
THAT IT (THE MAJORITY) IS NOT UP TO THE TASKS AND
OBLINGATIONS FOR WHICH IT WAS CONSTITUTED. END QUOTE

7. EUROPEAN UNITY. CONFIRMING THE PCI'S QUOTE
EUROPEAN CHOICE END QUOTE, BERLINGUER POINTED OUT
THAT UNTIL NOW THE PROCESS OF EUROPEAN UNITY HAS
BEEN LARGELY CARRIED OUT BY FORCES AND INTERESTS
CLOSELY TIED TO THE CAPITALIST STRUCTURE WHICH
THE PCI WISHES TO TRANSFORM. BERLINGUER NOTED THAT
THE PCI HOPES QUOTE TO REALIZE HERE IN WESTERN
EUROPE AN ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND STATE STRUCTURE
NO LONGER CAPITALIST THAT DOES NOT COPY
ANY MODEL AND DOES NOT REPEAT ANY OF THE SOCIALIST
EXPERIENCE THUS FAR REALIZED AND THAT, AT THE
SAME TIME, DOES NOT LIMIT ITSELF TO EXHUMING SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC EXPERIENCE, WHICH HAVE THUS FAR ONLY
LIMITED THEMSLEVES TO THE MANAGEMENT OF CAPITISM.

8. COMMENTS: BLERNGUER'S RESPONSE TO LA
REPUBBLICA'S QUESTIONS REPRESENT A CONDENSATION
OF HIS SPEECH TO THE PCI'S RECENTLY CONCLUDED
CENTRAL COMMITTEE SESSION. THEY THUS INDICATE
NOTHING NEW IN TERMS OF POLITICAL INITIATIVES ON
THE PART OF THE PCI. NEVERTHELESS, THEY DO
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INDICATE THE DEEP CONCERN OF THE PCI OVER THE
POLITICAL COURSE UPON WHICH THE PSI LEADERSHIP
HAS EMBARKED--WITH ITS RESULTING DETERIORATION OF
PCI-PSI RELATIONS ON THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS--
AND THE INTENTION OF THE PCI TO WORK MORE AGRES-

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SIVELY FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION BY THE GOVERNMENT OF
THE PROGRAM AGREED UPON AT THE TIME OF THE FORMATION
IN MARCH OF THE PRESENT PARLIAMENTARY MAJORITY.HOLMES

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